

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 AID-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /075 W

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R 241037Z OCT 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2574

INFO AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONSUL LAHORE

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

CINCPAC

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CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PK

SUBJECT: POLITICS IN THE NORTH WEST FRONTIER  
PROVINCE

REF: ISLAMABAD 9672

FOLLOWING RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL PESHAWAR:

1. DURING THE PAST THREE MONTHS THE PPP FURTHER  
INCREASED ITS STRENGTH IN THE PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLY AND  
CONSOLIDATED ITS POSITION AS THE DOMINANT PARTY IN  
THE PROVINCE. AS RESULT OF WINNING OVER ONE MORE MPA  
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FROM RANKS OF QAIYUM MUSLIM LEAGUE (IN ADDITION TO

THE FOUR RECRUITED IN JUNE) AND IN FORCING THE DEFECTION OF TWO MPA'S FROM THE NAP, THE RULING PARTY INCREASED ITS STRENGTH IN THE ASSEMBLY TO 22 AND OBTAINED AN ABSOLUTE MAJORITY IN HOUSE OF 42.

2. CHIEF MINISTER NASRULLAH KHATTAK CONTINUED TO SOLIDIFY HIS POSITION AS THE PRIME MINISTER'S VICEROY IN THE PROVINCE. HIS IMAGE AS AN EFFECTIVE POLITICAL OPERATOR WAS OF COURSE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED BY HIS PARTY'S SUCCESSFUL FORAYS AGAINST BOTH THE QML AND THE NAP. VERY MUCH IN CHARGE OF PROVINCIAL AFFAIRS, HE HAS GAINED REPUTATION OF BEING TOUGH AND RUTHLESS. WHILE SOME OF NASRULLAH'S PPP COLLEAGUES ARE REPORTEDLY UNHAPPY ABOUT HIS ARROGANCE AND DICTATORIAL WAYS, NO OTHER LEADER WITHIN THE PARTY HAS SO FAR EMERGED AS A POSSIBLE RIVAL.

3. OPPOSITION PARTIES HAVE BEEN RELATIVELY INACTIVE DURING THE PERIOD. IN THE CASE OF THE NAP THIS WAS DUE IN PART TO THE ABSENCE OF WALI KHAN FROM THE POLITICAL SCENE AND IN PART BECAUSE THE LOCAL NAP LEADERS FEEL INHIBITED ABOUT PLAYING AN ACTIVE POLITICAL ROLE UNTIL THE SUPREME COURT HANDS DOWN ITS DECISION IN THE REFERENCE CASE. IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED IN OPPOSITION CIRCLES THAT THE COURT WILL CONFIRM THE GOVERNMENT'S BANNING OF THE NAP AND THAT WALI KHAN WILL THEN RECREATE THE OLD PARTY UNDER A NEW NAME. OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO NAP MPA'S IS THE PROSPECT OF THE GOVERNMENT FOLLOWING UP THE COURT'S ADVERSE DECISION WITH A DECREE (SIMILAR TO THE AYUB REGIME'S ELECTIVE BODIES DISQUALIFICATION ORDER) PROHIBITING MEMBERS OF THE NATIONAL AND PROVINCIAL ASSEMBLIES FROM CONTESTING ELECTIONS FOR A SPECIFIED NUMBER OF YEARS.

4. OPPOSITION ELEMENTS WERE, HOWEVER, CONSIDERABLY ELATED BY THE SEPTEMBER POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PUNJAB WHICH APPEARED TO WEAKEN THE PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION IN THAT KEY PROVINCE. IN THE VIEW OF MOST LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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OPPOSITION LEADERS, THE DEFECTION OF KHAR AND RAMAY, ALONG WITH 15-20 PUNJABI MPA'S, FORESHADOWS POLITICAL CRISIS OF SIGNIFICANT PROPORTIONS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER AND OPENS UP THE POSSIBILITY THAT HE MIGHT SOON BE FACED WITH A STRUGGLE FOR SURVIVAL. NAP LEADERS IN PARTICULAR WERE DELIGHTED THAT KHAR DECIDED TO MAKE PUNJABI PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY THE KEY ISSUE OF HIS BY-ELECTION CAMPAIGN. THEY PUBLICLY WELCOMED (WITHOUT

ENDORISING) KHAR'S STATEMENTS ON THIS ISSUE, BELIEVING THAT HE HAS GIVEN AN IMPORTANT BOOST TO THE CAUSE OF PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY IN BOTH NWFP AND BALUCHISTAN.

5. MASS OF PEOPLE IN PROVINCE REMAIN DISSATISFIED WITH BOTH CENTRAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS. HIGH PRICES, ECONOMIC STAGNATION, GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO FULFILL PROMISES, ALL-PERVASIVE CORRUPTION, AND HIGH-HANDEDNESS OF CIVIL AND POLICE OFFICIALS CONTRIBUTED TO A GENERAL FEELING OF UNHAPPINESS WITH GOVERNMENT AND TO UNPOPULARITY OF PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO. DURING PERIOD UNDER REVIEW, THERE WERE INDICATIONS ALSO THAT PROVINCE'S EDUCATED ELITE IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY IMPATIENT WITH CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT INABILITY TO RESOLVE QUESTION OF ALLOCATION OF INDUS RIVER WATER AMONG PROVINCES AND ITS FAILURE TO PROCEED WITH CONSTRUCTION OF IMPORTANT CHASHMA RIGHT BANK CANAL IN DERA ISMAIL KHAN DISTRICT. THE GOVERNMENT'S APPARENT FIRM DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH EXPENSIVE LAWARAI TUNNEL, AIMED AT OPENING UP CHITRAL DISTRICT, WAS NOT WELL RECEIVED. GENERAL FEELING IS THAT IT IS TOO COSTLY A PROJECT (ANNOUNCED PRICE IS \$60,000,000 BUT EXPECTED TO COST FOUR TIMES THAT) FOR PAKISTAN TO UNDERTAKE AT TIME WHEN MONEY IS NEEDED FOR MORE IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT ELSEWHERE.  
BYROADE

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